



JEFFERSON COUNTY VETERANS' SERVICES OFFICE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: February 9th, 2010

Appointments Necessary at County Veterans Service Office

Record numbers of Veterans are descending on Veterans Service Offices at county courthouses across the state. In Jefferson County there have been many days recently where the waiting room literally overflowed into the halls. It is a remarkable time in history for Veterans Service Offices in general. Following a long "peacetime" period – some offices were downsized just as the country became entrenched in two major wars.

Many people assume that the increased demand for services is due to the return of service-members from Iraq and Afghanistan – but this is only part of the picture. It's true that young veterans – especially from the National Guard and Reserve are coming in unprecedented numbers to establish contact, place discharge papers on record, sign up for healthcare and education benefits and file disability claims. But much if not more of the traffic is the result of the overall increased level of publicity about Veteran's issues and benefits -- which has lead Veterans of all eras to seek assistance for the first time or to return after many years due to a change in life-circumstance.

Consider that WWII and Korean war veterans and/or their surviving spouses, now in their 80's and 90's, are coming in for the first time to apply for benefits to help with costs of in-home or assisted living care and that Vietnam veterans are reaching retirement age, seeking healthcare and prescription drug options – and many are dealing with illnesses linked to their exposure to Agent Orange. Add to that the veterans who are being laid off in record numbers and are coming in because they've lost their health insurance or are exploring what education benefits might be available to them to start a new career-- and you can begin to understand the scope of the situation.

The position of County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) was created after WWII to assist veterans in untangling the red tape associated with applying for State and Federal benefits because so many people were just giving up in frustration. Over the years, the bureaucracy has become no less unwieldy – rules change, programs come and go – but the good news is there is help available. "Serving the constant stream of walk-in traffic makes it hard to keep up with constantly ringing phones and hampers our ability to return phone messages in a timely manner, said Yvonne Duesterhoeft, Jefferson County Veterans Service Officer. "It also creates backlogs in getting the necessary paperwork out the door when we can't finish with one client before the next one sits down at the desk!" she continued.

For those reasons and in an effort to serve Veterans more efficiently, area Veterans Service Officers are strongly recommending appointments be made. Jefferson County veterans should call (920) 674-7240. Dodge County Veterans should call Mark Grams at (920) 386-3798.

The website: www.WICVSO.org lists the contact information for Veterans Service Officers in the other 70 Wisconsin Counties.